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Docket No.: 03025/100G659-US2

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a loaner car to a customer who scheduled a service appointment for a vehicle at a service center using a machine connected to a distributed computer network, comprising the steps of:
 - a) establishing a session between the machine and a host server associated with the service center over the distributed computer network;
 - b) providing through the machine access to an electronic appointment book maintained by the host server associated with the service center and information as to open time slots in the electronic appointment book at the service center during which the vehicle can be serviced for the customer to see;
 - c) the customer scheduling a service appointment in the electronic appointment book of the service center in one of said open time slots during the session with the host server;
 - d) prompting the customer at the machine for a loaner car with content from the host server; and
 - e) responding to if the customer's requests for the loaner car by:
 1. pre-approving the loaner car request;
 2. establishing a code for releasing car keys to the loaner car;
 3. during the session with the host server, providing to the customer the code to a lock box at the service center; and
 4. releasing the car keys to the customer upon entry of the code at the lock box.

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2. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein if prescribed conditions are met by the customer, then the loaner car is provided to the customer free of cost.
3. (Original) The method as in claim 2, wherein the prescribed conditions include spending at least threshold dollar amount at the service center.
4. (Original) The method as in claim 2, wherein the prescribed conditions include that the customer have purchased the vehicle at a dealership associated with the service center.
5. (Original) The method as in claim 1, including the additional step of the customer retrieving keys to the customer's vehicle from the lock box using the code.
6. (Original) The method as in claim 5, wherein the customer's keys are only retrievable if a bill for the service appointment has been paid.
7. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein the code is provided to the customer by e-mail.
8. (Original) The method as in claim 1, wherein the step of pre-approving the loaner car request includes obtaining one or more of the following: a security deposit from the customer, the customer's driver's license, and information concerning the customer's vehicle insurance.
9. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a loaner car to a customer who scheduled a service appointment for a vehicle at a service center using a machine connected to a distributed computer network, comprising the steps of:
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- a) establishing a session between the machine and a host server associated with the service center over the distributed computer network;
- b) providing through the machine access to an electronic appointment book maintained by the host server associated with the service center and information as to open time slots in the electronic appointment book at the service center during which the vehicle can be serviced for the customer to see;
- bc) the customer scheduling a service appointment in the electronic appointment book of the service center in one of said open time slots during the session with the host server;
- ed) prompting the customer at the machine for a loaner car with content from the host server during the session with the host server; and
- ed) responding to if the customer's requests for the loaner car by:
 - 1. pre-approving the loaner car request;
 - 2. receiving a code from a lock box at the service center;
 - 3. during the session with the host server, providing to the customer the code to the a lock box at the service center; and
 - 4. releasing the car keys to the customer upon entry of the code at the lock box.

10. (Original) The method as in claim 9, wherein if prescribed conditions are met by the customer, then the loaner car is provided to the customer free of cost.

11. (Original) The method as in claim 10, wherein the prescribed conditions include spending at least threshold dollar amount at the service center.

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12. (Original) The method as in claim 10, wherein the prescribed conditions include that the customer have purchased the vehicle at a dealership associated with the service center.
13. (Original) The method as in claim 9, including the additional step of the customer retrieving keys to the customer's vehicle from the lock box using the code.
14. (Original) The method as in claim 13, wherein the customer's keys are only retrievable if a bill for the service appointment has been paid.
15. (Original) The method as in claim 9, wherein the code is provided to the customer by e-mail.
16. (Original) The method as in claim 9, wherein the step of pre-approving the loaner car request includes obtaining one or more of the following: a security deposit from the customer, the customer's driver's license, and information concerning the customer's vehicle insurance.
17. (New) The method as in claim 1, including the additional steps of:
 - conveying from the machine geographic information concerning a location of the customer to the host server;
 - locating one or more service centers within a geographic region including the location of the customer; and
 - providing a selection of service centers to the customer from the host server to the machine.

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18. (New) The method as in claim 1, including the additional steps of:
 - prompting the customer at the machine for responses to questions concerning the vehicle;
 - diagnosing a problem with the vehicle;
 - conveying the diagnosis electronically to the local service center and to the machine.
19. (New) The method as in claim 1, wherein the electronic appointment book comprises a software program having multiple permission levels and wherein a first permission level accorded to the customer through the machine permits different capabilities than a second permission level accorded to the service center.
20. (New) The method as in claim 1, wherein the electronic appointment book comprises a scheduling software useable by the service center internally as well as for receiving appointments and appointment requests from the customers through the distributed computer network.

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